



**Important dates to remember:**

**Today's Exam Date:**

**Next Appointment:**

**Medical care provider's name and phone:**

**For more information, contact:**

**The Cancer Information Service** (se habla español)  
1-800-4-CANCER, <http://www.cancer.gov/cis>

**National Ovarian Cancer Coalition**  
1-888-OVARIAN, <http://www.ovarian.org/>

**Women's Cancer Network**  
1-800-444-4441, <http://www.wcn.org>

For one copy of this pamphlet or this information in Braille, audio-cassette, large print or computer disk, call or write the Office of Women's Health, 714 P St., Rm. 792, Sacramento, CA 95814, phone (916) 653-3330, fax (916) 653-3535.



Gray Davis, Governor, State of California  
Grantland Johnson, Secretary, Health and Human Services Agency  
Diana M. Bontá, R.N., Dr.P.H., Director, California Department of Health Services

For copies of this pamphlet, request an order form (DHS 2031) from the California Department of Health Services (DHS) Warehouse. Fax your request to (916) 928-1326, or call (916) 928-9203 for information. This pamphlet is also available on the OWH Web Site: [www.dhs.ca.gov/director/owh](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/director/owh).

English-Gynecologic Cancers, Pub 306, 11/02

# Gynecologic Cancers...

(Women's Reproductive Cancers)

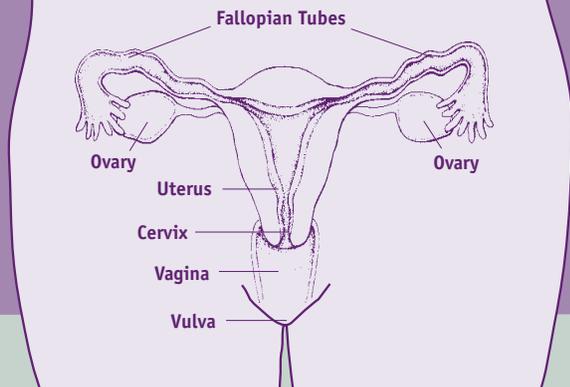


*What*

**Women**

**Need to**

**Know**



## What are Women's Reproductive Cancers?

These are cancers of a woman's reproductive sex organs. They are also called gynecologic cancers. They include cancer of the:

- Vulva (lips around opening of vagina)
- Vagina (birth canal)
- Cervix (opening to the womb)
- Uterus (womb)
- Fallopian tubes (carry eggs to womb)
- Ovaries (hold the eggs)

### Who is at Risk?

All women have some risk. Read this pamphlet and learn more about:

- your risk
- signs of cancer
- ways of finding the cancer early

## Cancer of the Ovaries

### Did You Know?

More women die of this cancer than from any other reproductive cancer.

### Who is at Risk?

You have **more** risk for cancer of the ovaries if:

- you are over 50 years of age
- someone in your family has had cancer of the ovaries or breast
- you had breast cancer
- you have not had children
- you have used hormones for menopause ("change of life") for more than 10 years

You have **less** risk for cancer of the ovaries if:

- you have used the "pill" (to not become pregnant) for more than 5 years
- you have breast fed your babies

### What Should I Look For?

Many women have no symptoms. Sometimes it is hard to tell that symptoms are related to the ovaries. Some women have:

- pain, a full feeling, or a lump in the belly that does not go away
- bleeding from the vagina that is not normal
- stomach problems that do not go away, like gas, nausea or discomfort in the lower belly
- pain when having sex

# Cancer of the Uterus

## Did You Know?

Cancer of the uterus is the most common women's reproductive cancer. This cancer is also called endometrial cancer and it usually starts in the lining of the womb.

## Who is at Risk?

You have more risk for cancer of the uterus if:

- you are over 50 years of age
- you have too much body fat, have diabetes or high blood pressure
- you are taking the hormones for menopause ("change of life")
- you have not had children
- your menopause started after age 52
- you take *tamoxifen*, a medicine for breast cancer

## What Should I Look For?

Some women have:

- bleeding or discharge from the vagina that is not normal
- a full feeling or cramps in the belly that does not go away
- lost or gained weight without trying

# Cancer of the Cervix

## Did You Know?

Cancer of the cervix can be prevented with regular Pap tests. The Pap test can find cells that are not normal before they become cancer.

## Who is at Risk?

You have more risk for cancer of the cervix if:

- you do not get regular Pap tests and pelvic exams
- you or your sex partner have had many sex partners
- you had sex at an early age
- you have had genital warts (HPV infection)
- you smoke

## What Should I Look For?

Many women have no symptoms. Some women have:

- bleeding, spotting or discharge from the vagina that is not normal
- bleeding after having sex
- pain when having sex



## Less Common Cancers

### Did You Know?

Cancers of the vagina, vulva, and fallopian tubes are not common.

### Who is at Risk?

You have more risk for these cancers if:

- you are over 50 years of age
- you have had cancer of the cervix, or other reproductive cancers
- you have had genital warts also called HPV

**The Best Way to Protect Yourself is to Find the Cancer Early!**



## What Can I Do To Protect Myself?

**V**isit your doctor or medical care provider to:

- Get yearly pelvic exams (that include the vagina and rectum)
- Get yearly Pap tests
- Talk about your risk for cancer of the ovaries, cervix, and uterus
- Report any warning signs or changes you have noticed

Cancer of the ovaries is hard to find. Talk to your provider about all your symptoms, even if they do not seem to be related to the ovaries. Your provider may use ultrasound and the CA-125 blood test to help find cancer of the ovaries, if you are at risk.

### What Else Can I Do to Stay Healthy?

- Eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day
- Exercise 30 minutes each day
- Stay at a healthy weight
- Practice safer sex—use a condom

